

November 30, 2001
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59803

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed please find for your review the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Use of Helicopter to Transport Mountain Goats into Scapegoat Wilderness.

The proposal is to airlift with helicopter approximately 10 mountain goats to a winter range 1.5 miles within the Scapegoat Wilderness, north of Lincoln, MT. The purpose is to re-establish a viable population of mountain goats near Red Mountain and Sourdough Creek. This action would occur in either February or March 2002 and/or in one of those months in 2003.

This project is a proposal initiated by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and is funded by Big Sky Brewing Company, Boone and Crockett Club, Bouma Post Company, Hi Country Jerky Company, and Safari Club International.

The decision authority for the use of helicopters in the Scapegoat Wilderness is with the Helena National Forest Supervisor, Tom Clifford.

Comments will be accepted until 5 p.m. on December 31, 2001. Comments may be sent to Bob Henderson, FWP, 3201 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59804, phone (406)542-5500, email: henderson_bob@hotmail.com.

Sincerely yours,

Mack Long
Regional Supervisor

Lewis + Clark

Draft

MEPA/NEPA/HB495 GENERIC CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action: Use of motorized equipment in a wilderness area.
2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: Fish, Wildlife & Parks.
3. Name of Project: Use of helicopter to transport mountain goats into Scapegoat Wilderness.
4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency):

5. If Applicable:

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: February 2002
Estimated Completion Date: March 2003
Current Status of Project Design (% complete):

None

6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township):

Scapegoat Wilderness: The landing site is just north of Red Mountain and east of Sourdough Creek. The general legal description is T16N, R9W, S16 or 21.

7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

(a) Developed:	(d) Floodplain
residential..... acres acres
industrial..... acres	(e) Productive:
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/ Recreation..... acres	irrigated cropland..... acres
	dry cropland..... acres
	forestry..... acres
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas..... acres	rangeland..... acres
	other
 acres

8. Map/site plan: Attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

9. Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project Including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action:

Proposal and Justification

This is an assessment to consider the impacts associated with using motorized equipment in the Scapegoat Wilderness. The proposal is to use a helicopter to transport and release approximately ten mountain goats at a site north of Red Mountain, 1.5 miles within the Wilderness boundary. The purpose of this action is to re-establish a mountain goat population in the southern portion of the Scapegoat Wilderness. The proposed alternative, a non-mechanized alternative and no action are discussed in Part II of this document.

Wilderness considerations: The Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Management Framework for the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex (1995), agreed upon by United States Forest Service and FWP, outlines the process for addressing a proposal to use motorized access to manage fish and wildlife with the Scapegoat Wilderness. According to guideline 10 (c) "...indigenous species may be transplanted, if their populations have been reduced by excessive human actions. Transplants will be made in a manner compatible with wilderness; motorized methods...may be allowed if they are the minimum necessary to accomplish an approved transplant."

Helicopter assistance will be necessary to safely and successfully place mountain goats on a winter range in the Red Mountain area. Helicopter transport of the goats to that winter range will minimally impact the Wilderness. The distance inside the Wilderness boundary is just 1.5 miles. No other wilderness users are likely to be in the area at that season. Because of frozen, snow-covered conditions, ground disturbance will be minimal and temporary. Helicopter landings would be brief and occur during a portion of one day. A successful re-introduction ultimately would enhance wilderness values in the area.

History: Mountain goats are indigenous to the southern edge of the Scapegoat Wilderness. Goats were most commonly observed around Red Mountain, Sourdough Creek and Copper Lakes prior to 1980. No one is sure why they disappeared, but over-harvest (legal and illegal) is the most likely factor.

FWP and the Lincoln RD have attempted to re-establish a viable mountain goat population in the Red Mountain area to increase species diversity and to provide hunting and viewing opportunities for wilderness visitors. In 1984 the southern portion of the Wilderness was closed to legal goat hunting by FWP, and permits were greatly reduced in the remaining part of Hunting District 280.

When mountain goats became available for transplants in summer and fall of 1989, FWP and USFS cooperatively released a total of fourteen goats in Stonewall Creek and Red Creek. Subsequent helicopter surveys and ground observations indicate that the transplant has failed to establish a viable population. In a July 2000 helicopter survey of the area, only 2 goats were observed. No kids have been reported since the mid-1990s.

Failure of the 1989 transplant probably occurred because goats were released outside the Wilderness in the summer and fall, rather than placing goats on the winter range inside the Wilderness during the winter months. Review of radio telemetry and ear tag return data documented an out-migration of transplanted goats that left very little reproductive potential in the transplant area. Five of the eight transplanted females never contributed to population establishment. One died and four others soon left the mountain range. Two of the 6 males were later shot in the Swan Range.

Need: Natural re-colonization from other areas has not occurred, and such an occurrence is unlikely, as the Red Mountain ridge complex is topographically isolated from other occupied habitats to the north and west.

Transplanting mountain goats is the most likely means of re-establishing a viable population in the Red Mountain area. Most successful transplants of wild ungulates in Montana are made in the winter. Animals released on winter ranges are temporarily restricted by climatic conditions long enough to form bonds with the new habitat. Pregnant females often produce young there in the spring, further bonding the new occupants to the site.

Mountain goat winter range exists in the lower reaches of the Sourdough Creek

drainage. On the east side of Sourdough Creek, at lower elevations north of Red Mountain, steep west-to-southwest facing cliffs are contiguous with grassy, wind-swept benches, making ideal winter habitat for mountain goats. Mountain goats have been observed there from aircraft in the winter.

The transplant will have the greatest probability of success, if mountain goats are released on the lower Sourdough Creek winter range, during the winter, while the few goats remaining from the previous transplant are still alive. Just as importantly, the wind-swept benches provide safe helicopter landing and goat release sites.

Methods: FWP has approved the winter capture of approximately 10 mountain goats in the Crazy Mountains, beginning in February 2002. Once captured, the animals will need to be released, as soon as possible, to reduce physiological stress.

Goats will be crated for safety and transported by truck to Lincoln. A helicopter with long line and cargo net will haul two to three crated goats per flight to the release site. There, 2-4 people will uncrate and release the goats. Approximately five flights will be required to transport goats and people. The operation should be complete in about four hours. Flights will be direct from Lincoln to the release site and back. All materials (boxes, rope, net, etc.) will be removed from the release site. In the event that fewer than ten goats are captured, they will be released as described above, but another effort in the same or the following winter may be required.

10. Listing of any other local, state, or federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction:

(a) Permits:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
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(b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
U.S. Forest Service, Helena National Forest
Safari Club International
Boone and Crockett Club
Hi Country Jerky
Bouma Post Company
Big Sky Brewing Company

(c) Other overlapping or additional jurisdictional responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
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U.S. Forest Service - administration of the wilderness area

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A. Evaluation of the Impacts of the Proposed Action Including Secondary and Cumulative Impacts on the Physical and Human Environment:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACTS				Can Impacts Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		x				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
c. Destruction, covering, or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition, or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (continued)

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACTS				Can Impacts Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality?		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		x				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns, or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (continued)

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACTS				Can Impacts Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality, including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, or pathogens?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in the risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Violation of the Montana Non Degradation Statute?		X				
j. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
k. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
l. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
m. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (continued)

4. <u>VEGETATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity, or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered plant species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?	X					4e.
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Item 4e: It is possible that goats (hair and feces) might contain seeds from noxious weeds. It also possible that boot soles and helicopter skids might also transport such seeds to the Wilderness. These possibilities are considered remote.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (continued)

5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of non-game species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?	X					5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest, or other human activity)?			X			5g.
h. Other:		X				

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish/Wildlife Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Item 5f: Wolverine and Canada lynx can be found inside and outside the Wilderness in a variety of habitats. Lynx tend to occupy timbered habitats at lower elevations in the winter. The impact of helicopter noise and the presence of personnel releasing the goats is believed to be limited to few, if any, individuals in the immediate vicinity of the of the landing site. The impact would be temporary, and it is believed that animals would return over a short period of time.

Item 5g: The operational noise associated with an internal combustion engine or gas turbine engine may have an impact on game animals only in the immediate vicinity of the project. The impact is believed to be limited to the few remaining goats, and may cause them to temporarily relocate during the operation. In the event that animals in the immediate vicinity move, it is believed that they will return over a short period of time. No other game species are thought to be in the area during the winter months. Stress and potential mortality for captured goats will be reduced by rapid and safe transport to the release site.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			x			6a.
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Noise/Electrical Effects (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Item 6a: The use of a helicopter would temporarily increase noise levels during the operation and is expected to affect only the direct vicinity of the release site. No users of the area are likely to be there in the winter to hear the helicopter.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		x				

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

b. Conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		x				7c.
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		x				
e. Other:		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Item 7c: This is a Wilderness area where motorized uses are limited to the minimum necessary to manage resources and protect human safety. Helicopters are often used for emergency evacuations, fire suppression and other tasks in Wilderness areas. Helicopter use to transplant goats is the minimum necessary to accomplish the transplant. It is believed that given the season of use and the short duration of operation will have little or no impact on other users.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?	x					8a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. Other:		x				

Item 8a. Only in the event of a helicopter crash or otherwise catastrophic accident would jet fuel be released in an undesignated area.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		x				

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		x				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		x				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		x				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		x				
f. Other:		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
e. Other:		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

	IMPACT	Can Impact	Comment
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*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u>					Be Mitigated	Index
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?			x			11a.
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			x			11c.
d. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Items 11a and c:

Helicopters are periodically used in Wilderness areas for emergency evacuation, fire suppression, wildlife surveys and fish stocking. Their presence is an alteration in the pristine aesthetics, but is considered to be "temporary," have the least impact necessary for the management of the area. No users are likely to be in the area during the winter season.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u>	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated	Comment Index
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural or historic values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. Other:		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u> Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources, which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. Other:	x					13f.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Summary Evaluation of Significance (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Item 13f: The use of motorized equipment in the wilderness is not uncommon. This project is proposed for a limited period as the minimum necessary to accomplish the transplant, and may span 2 winters if weather or other conditions prevent a successful capture and transplant in 2002.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (Continued)

1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action, whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider, and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

Alternative Solution 1 (No action)

No action will result in no viable mountain goat population in the Red Mountain area. FWP will not attempt another summer release outside of the Wilderness, because success is not likely. Natural re-colonization is not likely to occur either, given the topographic isolation of this ridge complex from other occupied goat habitats. Given their apparent lack of reproduction, the remaining goats probably will die without replacing themselves over the next few years.

Alternative Solution 2 (Non-mechanized)

Non-mechanized means of accomplishing the objective of re-introducing mountain goats to Red Mountain are not biologically practical; nor are they safe for personnel trying to effect the transportation and release of the goats. The only non-mechanized means of transporting mountain goats are horseback and dogsled. Horses could not negotiate the deep snows filling trails into the area. While summer horse transport is possible, a summer release is likely to be unsuccessful because of out-migration, as occurred in

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

1989. Dogsleds could not safely traverse the steep, timbered terrain loaded with 150-200 lb. goats, and the time spent trying to do so would cause severe physiological stress the animals. The goats could be helicopter-transported to Stonewall Mountain outside the Wilderness. A relatively small goat winter range exists 1500 feet below a safe landing site. The landing site is at about 8200 feet, where there is a high probability that deep snow accumulations and lack of forage would hasten goat mortality, instead of survival. Only during very mild winters, with little or no snow accumulation between the landing site and the winter range, is the risk of placing animals on Stonewall Mountain worth taking.

Comparisons between methods and other considerations

The proposed action of using a helicopter to transport mountain goats to a release site on a winter range 1.5 miles within the Scapegoat Wilderness is the only method that safely transports goats into the Wilderness. The proposed method also is the only means likely for re-establishing a viable mountain goat population in the Red Mountain area, because, compared to Alternative 1 (no action) mountain goats are will not naturally re-colonize the area, and, compared to Alternative 2, the proposed action places goats on the winter range during the winter, avoiding the risk of out-migration that another summer transplant would incur. Compared to Alternative 2, goats will held and handled for the least amount of time, reducing stress to those animals. Compared to horse or dogsled transport the time of human presence in the Wilderness will be the least. Compared to helicopter transport of mountain goats to Stonewall Mountain, the proposed action places goats directly a winter range, not 1500 feet above the one in Stonewall Creek. The Sourdough winter range is substantially larger in area and has less snow accumulation than Stonewall, enhancing the survival of transplanted goats.

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

The Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Management Framework for the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex (1995), agreed upon by United States Forest Service and FWP, outlines the process for addressing a proposal to use motorized access to manage fish and wildlife with the Scapegoat Wilderness. According to guideline 10 (c) "...indigenous species may be transplanted, if their populations have been reduced by excessive human actions. Transplants will be made in a manner compatible with wilderness; motorized methods...may be allowed if they are the minimum necessary to accomplish an approved transplant."

The proposed action meets guideline 10 (c) in that mountain goats are indigenous to the Red Mountain area, and that the native population was apparently reduced by excess legal and illegal harvest. Employment of a helicopter (mechanized method) is necessary to accomplish a successful transplant. Helicopter use will be the minimum necessary to get the goats on a known winter range. Flights will be direct to and from the release site and duration of operations will be the minimum to safely release the goats. It is believed that the proposed project will benefit future wilderness users by ensuring the persistence of mountain goats in this part of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex.

USFS personnel will be present to monitor and help with the operation.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT:

It is believed that the above text adequately identifies the proposal, alternatives, considerations, and concerns of each. No further evaluation or comment is required in this format. The decision authority is the Helena National Forest Supervisor.

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION:

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? YES / NO If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

An EIS is not required because the issue of limiting motorized equipment in the wilderness is based on a management philosophy rather than a quantifiable environmental impact. Furthermore, the framework document between USFS and FWP permit such activity if a sound argument can be made for its necessity in preserving the values of the complex. As described before, the mountain goats contribute to the unique value of the complex.

2. Describe the level of public involvement for this project, if any; and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

It is believed that the standard level of public involvement is appropriate, which includes legal notice, posting on FWP website, posting in local libraries, mailings to numerous organizations and individuals and posting at the FWP Region 2 headquarters.

3. Duration of comment period if any:

Thirty days – December 1 through December 31, 2001.

4. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Bob Henderson, Wildlife Biologist
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

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Missoula, MT 59804
(406) 542-5500
henderson_bob@hotmail.com

References cited:

United States Forest Service and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1995. Fish, wildlife and habitat management framework for the Bob Marshall Wilderness complex.

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.